



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES.

Baltimore, April 1895.

VICTOR HUGO IN THE ESTIMATION OF HIS COUNTRYMEN.

TEN years have elapsed since Victor Hugo, the most extraordinary man that France has ever produced, was carried to his resting place in the Pantheon. For his sake, the Church of Ste. Geneviève, which since the Restoration had been devoted to religious worship, was secularized by the Government and destined anew for a burial place of great men deserving the gratitude of the nation. On the first of June, 1885, the remains of the great poet were conveyed from the *Arc de Triomphe* in the *Champs-Élysées*, where they had been lying in state, to the crypt on Mount Geneviève. Never before had the Parisians witnessed a funeral procession accompanied by such tumultuous popular demonstrations, as when the plain hearse of the millionaire-poet passed along the avenues and boulevards, crowded with half a million of the population.

As the recollection of these scenes of a decade ago, and of similar outbursts of popular enthusiasm during Victor Hugo's life-time, associates itself with an estimation of his life and work, a desire to view the figure of the famous man in the light in which it rises before the eyes of his own countrymen grows stronger and stronger. There are good reasons for believing that only Frenchmen, and not many of them, can appreciate V. Hugo's work in its entirety. Only a French heart can feel strongly enough for the distinguished poet and great citizen to forget the ridiculous, and remember the sublime, which are so strangely mingled in his personality and in his productions.

On the sixth of January, 1829, when V. Hugo was in his twenty-seventh year, Désiré Nisard wrote these words:

"Have you read the new Odes of V. Hugo?—'They are absurd,' says a voice at my right. . . 'They are incomparably beautiful,' says one at my left. . . You imagine whence the two answers came; from the enemies and from the partisans of the poet. These two have hitherto formed his entire public."

These words were true not only in 1829, but

they have remained true during nearly the whole of V. Hugo's career; he seems to have had few impartial readers and critics till within the last ten or fifteen years.

Fifty-seven years later, in 1886, within a year after the poet's death, the same critic just quoted wrote: "V. Hugo has not attained the glory of one perfect production." This statement also holds true if we except a certain number of his lyrical poems; it expresses the common opinion of all, save the blindest admirers of the poet.

There are many reasons why Frenchmen should harbor for their illustrious countryman feelings of pride and admiration. The people saw in him the reflection of its own genius. He had maintained a superb attitude toward imperial usurpation, and his political and social ideas seemed to many to have been justified by the tragic end of the Second Empire; the unthinking millions had been captivated by his utopian ideas and his insane flatteries to the people of Paris. His brilliant literary genius was justly admired by the whole civilized world. Aside from all this, the circumstances surrounding his earlier career were such as to endear him to the hearts of those familiar with them.

V. Hugo's precocity was in some respects different from that of other great poets. Of course, he wrote verses early in life; his first poetic essays date from 1813, when he was eleven years old. At fifteen, he had composed a melodrama in three acts (*Inez de Castro*), a comic opera, and a number of poems. About the same time, in 1817, he competed for the French Academy's annual prize for poetry and received 'honorable mention' for his poem of three hundred lines on the *Advantages of Study*. His first novel (*Bug Jargal*) was also written at this period—upon a wager, in two weeks—and his first *Odes* brought him from the literary society of Toulouse two prizes and subsequently the title of *maître ès jeux floraux*.

But the boy Hugo wrote not only verses for his amusement. He had made up his mind to be a poet. "I will be Chateaubriand or nothing," he had written upon his copy-book when

a boy of fourteen, and he set himself to his task in good earnest. At seventeen he founded, in company with his two brothers, of whom the oldest was twenty-one, a literary journal, *le Conservateur littéraire*, (the name of Chateaubriand's journal was *le Conservateur*). A complete set of this journal, from December, 1819, till March, 1821, has been discovered by Edmond Biré.* Some entire numbers are from the pen of Victor, and prove that the young critic was not only master of an excellent style but possessed remarkable critical acumen as well.

V. Hugo's celebrity, however, dates from the publication of his first volume of *Odes* in 1822. The story of the origin of one of these poems is worth telling. On the night of February 4th, 1819, Victor was watching at the bed-side of his sick mother. She expressed her disappointment at his neglect to compete for a certain prize. After she had fallen asleep the boy went to work, and on the next morning he put into her hands the finished ode on the *Restoration of the Statue of Henry the Fourth*.

The study of V. Hugo's works reminds one, again and again, of a remark once made by the poet himself: "It is my childhood that has made my mind what it is." An imagina-

*EDMOND BIRÉ'S *V. Hugo avant 1830* (1 vol.), *V. Hugo après 1830* (2 vols.), *V. Hugo après 1852* (1 vol.), are among the most valuable contributions to the biography of the poet. Other valuable aids in the study of V. Hugo are: CHRENOUVIER, *V. Hugo le Poète*; E. DUPUY, *V. Hugo, l'homme et le poète*; L. MABILLEAU, *V. Hugo*; PETIT DE JULLEVILLE, *Le théâtre en France*; J. LEMAITRE, *Les Contemporains*; SAINTE-BEUVE, *Portraits contemporains*; NISARD, *Essays sur l'Ecole romantique*; E. FAGUET, *Etudes littéraires*; F. BRUNETIÈRE, *Nouvelles questions de critique*; G. PELLISIER, *Le mouvement littéraire au 19^{ième} siècle*; E. HENNEQUIN, *Etudes de critique scientifique*; A. GUYAN, *L'Art au point de vue sociologique*; LOUIS VEUILLLOT, *Etudes sur V. Hugo*; PAUL DE SAINT-VICTOR, *V. Hugo*; ALFRED BARBOU, *V. Hugo et son temps*; ALFRED ASSELINE, *V. Hugo intime*; GUSTAVE RIVET, *V. Hugo chez lui*; A. CHALLAMEL, *Souvenirs d'un Hugolâtre*; D'HEYLLI, *Documents de la guerre de 1870-71: Victor Hugo et la Commune*; Louis Ulbach, *Almanach de V. Hugo*; Gustave Larroumet, *La Maison de V. Hugo*; E. BIRÉ, *L'Année 1817*; E. DESCHANÉL, *Lamartine* (2 vols.); also numerous articles in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, and the autobiographical *Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie*. The plan of this essay precludes reference to any but French works on V. Hugo. Still, attention is called to a valuable article in 'Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung,' Munich, June 12, 1894: 'Neues über Victor Hugo,' by Professor Joseph Sarrazin.

tion naturally strong could not but be stimulated in an extraordinary degree by the ever changing scenes and too vivid impressions which were crowded into the first ten years of his life. Before he had reached this age, little Victor had been taken by his mother, the wife of one of Napoleon's generals, to the islands of Corsica and Elba; he had listened, in the kingdom of Naples, to the story of the exploits of Fra Diavolo, the famous bandit whom his father had captured; he had crossed the Pyrenees and occupied with his parents a luxurious palace in Madrid and attended in the same city the 'College of Nobles,' a 'sinister convent,' where the discipline was austere and the amusements even lugubrious; on Sundays the boys were taken to the cemetery for exercise. No wonder that the garden of the Feuillantines, where Mme Hugo, with her three boys, took up her abode after her return to Paris, in 1812, appeared to him like a haven of peace of which he later made the scene of the 'Idyl of the Rue Plumet' in *Les Misérables*. The names of two places, Hernani and Torquemada, where the family had stopped on the journey to Madrid, were afterward chosen by the poet as titles of two of his dramas. A reminiscence of the picture gallery in the Masserano palace is found in the scene of Ruy Gomez in *Hernani*. Elespuru and Gubetta, the two hateful characters in *Cromwell* and *Lucretia Borgia*, bear the names of two boys with whom the Hugo brothers fought at the convent school; but nothing excited the imagination of the boy so strongly as the hideous form of a dwarf-like valet that waited upon the sons of princes and nobles at the same school: the repulsive creations of Han d'Islande, of Triboulet in *The King Makes Merry*, and of Quasimodo in *Notre Dame de Paris*, owe their origin to this deformed creature.

Aside from these and other reminiscences of early impressions, it cannot be doubted that his early acquaintance with Spain and Southern Italy and the exciting, eventful scenes which history was unrolling before his eyes, determined, in a general way, the grand, magnificent, extravagant turn of his imagination. The same causes also explain the preference of the great French poet for the Span-

ish drama, "with its taste for the improbable and absurd in the play of the passions and of chance."

The unusual conditions of young Hugo's first acquaintance with the outside world receive all the more significance from the fact that his education in the narrower sense of the word, the mental discipline and training derived from teaching and from books, was by no means such as to insure that all-sided development of the mental faculties requisite for a well-balanced mind. It is true, he enjoyed regular instruction for five or six years, but in his reading he was absolutely without guidance, and although he mentions in his lyrics the Bible, Virgil and Homer as his favorite books, it is known from other sources that he read indiscriminately all sorts of books, among them Voltaire and Rousseau, his mother being of opinion that books could do no harm.

At all events, when V. Hugo entered upon his literary career with the set purpose of enlightening his nation and his age, his information as well as his mental training, were absurdly inadequate for such a task. And yet no other poet ever had a more exalted idea of his mission, or proclaimed it so frequently and with such emphasis, as V. Hugo. For sixty years, from the preface to his first *Odes*, in 1822, till the time of his death, he reasserts the high claims of the Poet in prefaces, lyrics and epics, and assigns to him attributes so varied that no other vocation can claim them all: the Poet is a worker, a teacher, a prophet, a holy dreamer, a sage, a thinker, a reformer; he is a judge, and avenger; he is Atlas carrying the globe; he is not only the first of critics but also the highest of philosophers.

How near to this lofty and unattainable ideal did V. Hugo come? What was his character, his life; and what the work he accomplished?

Goodness, universal kindness, gentleness combined with energy of action, sympathy with suffering humanity, pity for the sinner and great readiness to forgive, we are told, were his chief virtues, and again and again, in his prose and verse, do these traits rise to the surface. Neither can it be maintained that they are lacking in his actual life. The sincerity of V. Hugo's family affections cannot be doubted, notwithstanding a not infrequent

lack of tact in their manifestation, and even in spite of the presence, during fifty years of the poet's life, of 'Mme. Drouet'—an enigma which baffles the ordinary moral understanding.

V. Hugo's earnestness and faithful industry, the ardor with which he performed his literary task, day after day, through his long life, and the courage and hopefulness which never left him during his exile, whether enforced or voluntary, are traits of character well worth our admiration. There is also a certain manliness in V. Hugo's contempt for critics and in his principle to amend his old works by producing better ones. On the other hand, there is ample proof that the *man* was not indifferent to the critics, though the *poet* disdained to heed their advice. Scores of passages from his poems might be quoted in which he takes brutal revenge on those who had the boldness to find fault with some of his verses or to ridicule his political speeches; such offences he would remember forty years, and more, after they had been committed.

The sad truth is, that the homage and adulation, of which the young poet became the object especially since he occupied such a commanding position as the leader of the Romantic movement, about 1830, awakened in him an enormous pride. The consequence was that he soon had no longer any friends, but only subjects and worshippers, young men who could say with Théophile Gautier:

"If I were so unfortunate as to believe that a line of V. Hugo's could be bad, I should not dare confess it to myself, all alone, in the cellar, without a candle."

V. Hugo's marvelous imagination and gift of versification, his lack of philosophical training, the indiscriminate admiration of his friends, and the astounding ignorance of the young *littérateurs* who formed his circle of acquaintances, were the cause of his belief in his own superiority as a thinker. His vanity, "equal to his genius, which was immense," soon became the ruling passion of his life. Its ludicrous side may be illustrated by an anecdote told by Turgenieff:

"The 'master' was leaning upon the mantelpiece, surrounded by his disciples. One of these having expressed the wish that the street

on which V. Hugo was living might receive his name, the objection was made that it was too small, that one of the largest thoroughfares of Paris ought to be thus honored. But the enthusiasm of some of the poet's admirers did not stop here: it was claimed that all Paris ought to be named the 'City of Victor Hugo.' Whereupon the 'master' approvingly said: "The time will come, sir; the time will come (*ça viendra!*)!"

But V. Hugo's vanity led to worse things than ridicule; it beguiled him into disguising and distorting the truth. Ambition, and, we are glad to believe, patriotism impelled V. Hugo to add political renown to his literary fame. During his youth and early manhood he shared the political faith of his mother, who was a native, not exactly, as he claims, of the *Vendée*, the ancient stronghold of royalism, but of Britany. His *Odes* celebrate in enthusiastic strains of wonderful richness the "throne and the altar." Several of them show decided hostility to Bonaparte. In 1827, the year in which he wrote the preface to *Cromwell*, the manifesto of the Romantic school, he cast off the traditions both of classicism and of royalism. His next two volumes of lyrics, the *Orientales* (1829) and *Autumn Leaves* (1831), reveal a growing liberalism and especially an increasing admiration for the glory and power of the First Empire (*Napoléon, ce dieu, dont tu seras le prêtre*). Still, under the Orleans dynasty V. Hugo was warmly attached to the cause of monarchy. He was on almost intimate terms with Louis Philippe and with his son, the Duke of Orleans. If he had in earlier years accepted a pension from Louis XVIII, and the cross of the Legion of Honor from Charles X, whom as late as 1829 he assured of his loyalty and devotion, he was by the 'Citizen King' made an officer of the Legion of Honor and, in 1845, a peer of France, and he addressed to him the words: "Sire, God and France have need of you." Furthermore, remembering that his father, General Hugo, had been made a Count by King Joseph of Spain, which title, however, had never been recognized in France, the poet signed himself for years *Viscount Victor Hugo*. More than this; his aristocratic aspirations made him seek his ancestry in a noble Hugo family whose pedigree he traces back some three or four hundred years, and readers of

Les Misérables and *Notre Dame*, and of his book *Le Rhin*, will remember that he introduces his fictitious noble ancestors in these works.

In 1841, V. Hugo, entered the French Academy, and he was probably the most famous man in France when, in 1848, after the downfall of the Orleans monarchy, he took his seat in the Constituent Assembly as a deputy from Paris. These political inconsistencies, amidst the frequent changes of government in France, were in themselves not very strange; they seemed quite natural in the case of a man whose ideas, according to the most enlightened and dispassionate French critics, were "only reflexes of the ideas of his age"; his political changes were merely "modifications of his aptitude to reflect."

But it is more than strange, it is past believing, that vanity, or any other motive, should have inveigled V. Hugo into an attempt to prove to the world his consistency in political matters. In vain did he mutilate and alter passages in his works while boldly asserting that he had changed nothing; in vain did he ante-date poems and articles in order to assign his royalist tendencies to the years of his youth; his own emphatic assertions of the "fixity of his opinions," of the "immutable firmness of his principles," were of no more avail than the assurances of his friends that V. Hugo "never denied his past," that he has "never blushed to recall his early opinions." In 1850 he was a member of the extreme radical wing of the Republican party, and from that time on he remained a staunch Republican. After his return to France, in 1870, he was elected to the National Assembly, which, in 1871, held its meetings at Bordeaux, but he resigned his seat after a few months. Four years later, he once more entered politics as senator for life. At all times, whether a royalist, Bonapartist, or republican, he has been a friend of the people. In so far there was unity in his political life. But his influence upon public affairs in France was never of any importance.

The frequent outbursts of religious feeling in V. Hugo's writings, especially in his lyrics, must have invited many a reader to speculation on the poet's religion; but none, it is to be

presumed, have succeeded in defining his faith, either from his poetical confessions or from biographical data. In his earlier years, as far back as 1820-22, V. Hugo was as fervent a Catholic as any royalist of the time. Later, the negative element, the definitions of the God in whom he does *not* believe, are much more clearly stated than the positive. He has given expression to his religious ideas in several of his longer poems at various epochs; for example, in the poem entitled 'Wisdom' (1840), the last piece of *Lights and Shadows*; in the last number of *Contemplations* (1855); in the poem 'To the Bishop who calls me an atheist,' in *L'Année terrible* (1870); but his language is so vague and the thought so mystic as almost to defy analysis. Occasionally a simpler outpouring of the heart meets us in his pages, as in these lines of the poem in *Contemplations*, written at the spot on the Seine where the poet's daughter and her husband were drowned:

"I come to thee, oh Lord, Father, in whom I must believe!
 Apeased, I bring to thee
 The fragments of this heart, full of thy glory,
 Which thou hast broken.
 I come to thee, oh Lord! confessing that thou art
 Kind, merciful, indulgent, gentle, oh living God!
 I own, thou only know'st what thou art doing,
 And man is but a reed set trembling by the wind."

In 1848 V. Hugo was a fervent admirer of Pope Pius IX, who "points out the right and safe path to all kings, nations, statesmen, and thinkers." Scarcely three years later, in the *Châtiments*, he calls the same pope a 'butcher' and compares him to Alexander Borgia.

Charles Renouvier, one of the most philosophical of all the writers on V. Hugo, sums up the political and religious phases of the poet in these words:

"He has been successively all that the century has been, except a materialist and atheist. He has been Bonapartist, royalist, catholic, liberal monarchist, a vague deist, pantheist, a groping socialist, republican, absolute democrat, . . . a prophet profuse of blessings and of curses, metempsychosist, messianist, manichean, and millenarian."

But it is time to speak of those qualities of V. Hugo's *mind* which constitute the real source and power of his unquestionable genius. And here again, it behooves first to protest against the extravagant claims of some of his

followers. Every reader of V. Hugo's poetry and novels must at times have been exasperated by the dazzling array of historical and geographical names of which he is so fond. Thus, in the conclusion of the poem on the 'Battle of Sedan,' in *L'Année terrible*, we count forty proper names in eighteen lines; fifty-four names of persons, more or less known in history or literature, are introduced to help establish the fact that the plebiscite in 1870 was not the true verdict of the people; in a single letter in *Le Rhin* occur sixty-two dates and four hundred and sixty proper names!

Whether we may credit or not the poet's own statement that such enormous special information was stored in his memory, it is certain that those are mistaken who see in this display of erudition the proof of great learning. V. Hugo's memory was phenomenal but purely formal, retaining only the outward aspect of things; as his universal curiosity led him from his early childhood to devour all kinds of books, his memory must have been filled with a great mass of names and facts. A liberal use of these, combined with a great profusion of images and an occasional lack of coherence, will make the understanding of an author difficult. It is therefore possible that certain parts of the *Legend of Ages*, for example, to be understood, "require a degree of attention, a faculty of abstraction, a rapidity of thought, analogous to that which a Plato or Empedocles were wont to expect of their disciples," without *necessarily* involving great profundity or originality of thought.

It is a curious fact that the brightest of minds, even among the poet's own countrymen, are by no means agreed as to the rank to be assigned to V. Hugo as a thinker; their discussions of this question are not quite lacking in a comical element. Individual readers will of course discover serious thought where others do not see anything of the kind. So much, however, may be considered as settled at the present time, that V. Hugo did not fulfill a high mission as a philosopher; his philosophy of life was tainted with such a confusion of passion, duty, and law, that its influence, as far as it went, could not be beneficial. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that many single pieces and separate

passages in his works possess a wonderful power and breathe the spirit of profound human sympathy. More than this: Brunetière reminds us that while V. Hugo's ideas are few and of narrow range, seldom new and not often his own, new relations of ideas, enriching and advancing thought, result from his original, unexpected association of words. The poet himself is well aware of the important rôle, in his writings, of words as generators of ideas: "And I knew well," he says in *Contemplations*, "that the angry hand, which liberates the word, also sets free the idea." The influence of a reform of language upon the transformation of ideas can be traced in more than one period of French literature.

Our poet has also, unwittingly perhaps, and certainly without the intention of furnishing the key-note to his critics, stated one of the most striking characteristics of his genius, his power of echoing the ideas of his time:

"Love and the tomb, and fame, and life,
The gliding waves, in infinite succession,
Each breeze, each fatal or propitious ray,
Makes my own crystal soul vibrate with light;
My thousand-voiced soul, which God, whom I adore,
Has, a *sonorous echo*, placed in the midst of all,"
(*Feuilles d'automne.*)

V. Hugo's faculty of observation was extraordinary. His physical vision was very quick and of such vigor that he never used glasses, even in his old age. "His eye never rests upon a tower," says Sainte-Beuve, "without his counting the angles, sides and points." But it seems that, while his eye was attracted by the strongest reliefs, the most salient points, it was little sensible to color: his own pencil and crayon sketches are lacking in color distinctions, but exhibit strong light and shade effects. Psychologists tell us that a person's manner of seeing affects his manner of visualizing, and it is therefore not surprising that V. Hugo's poetic images are almost always marked by strong contrasts. Antithesis is the strongest characteristic of his style; not only his language, his form of expression, is antithetical, but he thinks in antitheses, and the contents of his poems and chapters, the characters of his dramas and novels, are almost without exception combinations of opposite elements. This tendency could not but prove dangerous to a poet of such marvelous gift of

imagination and unparalleled power of expression. His incredible facility of creating new expressions for the same idea, apparens already in his earliest productions, led in his later works to unheard of excesses. The idea that Marat was both good and bad, ferocious and charitable, is in one of his latest poems ('l'Echafaud,' in *Toute la lyre*) expressed by thirty-five different images, followed by a dozen more referring to Marat's companions whom the poet designates as "compassionate tigers" and "formidable lambs."

Often, this profusion of images forms a series of exclamations and apostrophes: on a single page in the *Legend of Ages* there are thirteen sentences all beginning with *Quoi!* 'What!', and all expressive of the poet's indignation at the degeneracy of the descendants of Wilhelm Tell and Arnold von Winkelried. In the novel '1793,' Gauvain, the republican, learns that his uncle Lantenac, the royalist, has fallen into his power. The young soldier's struggle between love and admiration for his highminded relative, and duty toward the Republic, is described by the author with wonderful imaginative power; the chapter includes many well-placed antitheses and effective images, but this struggle between the 'pros' and 'cons' is continued through *twenty-seven* pages, and the reader wearies in spite of all the poetic beauty of language and thought.

V. Hugo's imaginative power shows itself especially in his frequent and strange personifications; no other poet has with equal spontaneity transformed inanimate objects, natural forces, and moral phenomena and ideas into living beings: walls pierced by cannon balls *agonize*; trees endeavor to *escape*; the battles which Napoleon fought *lean* over his brow as he is resting on his couch; haughty England *rests her elbow* on his bed; his victories, sculptured in marble, *make signs* with their fingers and *hear* the emperor weep: the tree in the forest *consents* to all beneficent uses at the hand of man; it is willing to become a plough-tail, a mast for the ship, a pillar for the house, a log on the fire-place; but "tree, wilt thou become a gallows?" "Silence, man! Away axe! I belong to life!" The cannon on ship-board, which has broken loose from its cable, becomes:

"a furious beast, a monster, *rushing* upon the sailors, now plunging forward, now retreating; now it stops and *meditates*, then it flies like an arrow across the deck, whirls about, rears, attacks, kills, exterminates. . . you can reason with a mastiff, stun a bull, charm a boa, frighten a tiger, soothe a lion; but nothing avails with this monster: you cannot kill it, it is dead; and at the same time it *lives*; it lives a sinister life. . ."

The passage is too long to be quoted in full; what has been given is about one-fifth of the whole. The author becomes intoxicated with his own metaphors, and the reader is stunned by their flow.

The purest abstractions assume in the poet's mind visible forms endowed with personal qualities; justice *bleeds*, nothingness *laughs*, the shade *cries*; so does the morning dawn; the infinite becomes a "horrible receding porch"; the shade, a "hydra of which the nights form the pale vertebrae." His mythological genius rivals with primitive man in the power of personifying natural forces and phenomena.

There is no denying that V. Hugo's rhetoric deserves all the criticism that has been passed upon it: redundancy, verbosity, bombast are only too common faults of his. And his vocabulary is often exasperating. Jules Lemaitre calls him the "greatest collector of words that has ever lived since the creation of the world"; according to Brunetière he is the "most wonderful verbal artist" and the "most extraordinary collector of rhymes and rhythms that France has ever seen;" and Faguet says: "His genius of enumeration is such as to get the better of all dictionaries."

And yet it is through his style that V. Hugo has exerted the greatest influence upon his age. In the political field and in the realm of thought he has accomplished little, though it be not denied that "from the early years of our century he has waged a moral warfare for human emancipation, for intellectual and political freedom." As a dramatist he has many superiors in French literature; he cared too little for historical and human truth, his characters are not living men and women; the lyric tone, so common in his dramas, the continual intervention of the poet himself, who endows his characters with his own imagination instead of letting them speak from their

hearts; the prevalence of social and moral extremes and of excessive sentiment, these and other faults cause the poet to fall short of his own ideals as set forth in his prefaces. Whatever success his plays have won—including the famous victory, so often told, which he and his lieutenants of the Romantic School carried off at the sound of Hernani's bugle—has been due mainly to the irresistible power of his language and the magic flow of his verse.

V. Hugo's epic and lyric poetry has left a stronger impress upon French literature than his dramas. The truly grand pictures of his first *Legend of Ages*; the epic portions of his novels, such as the description of the battle of Waterloo in *Les Misérables*, and among his later works the 'Battle of Sedan' in *L'Année terrible*, and the *Art of Being a Grandfather*, with its contrasts of infinite tenderness and wrathful indignation, establish V. Hugo's position as an "epic poet of the highest order and marvelous power." No hostile criticism can point out a greater master of word-painting, or one more skillful and original in description and narration.

His lyrics are of an endless variety and of very unequal merit. Often they are deficient in warmth of feeling, and the intimate relation, the perfect harmony, between thought and expression, is sometimes lacking: the amazing art of the versifier occasionally overwhelms or stifles the emotions of the genuine poet, and the resulting disproportion or incongruity produces a chilling effect upon the reader. The *Châtiments* is, perhaps, the only volume of the poet in which his power of feeling never falls short of his power of expression; but in these poems hatred is unfortunately the power that stirs the poet's soul.

Still, with all their shortcomings, his numerous lyrical compositions contain so much of the highest order, that few will deny V. Hugo the title of the greatest French lyricist. Modern French poetry received through him the strongest and most varied impulses: in place of the vague and abstract style of the pseudo-classic school he brought to it vigor, plasticity, and brilliancy.

"The modern 'realists' and 'naturalists' owe to him the perception of life and the taste

for describing all its manifestations; the 'par-nassiens' are indebted to him for the revelation of the plastic value of words; and the 'symbolists' and 'décadents' for the intuition of word-music and delicate harmony of sound and idea."

The revival of many old words long since passed out of use, and their introduction into modern literature; the new meanings given to familiar words and the new relations established between them; the countless new images created with a power far superior to that of any other French writer: the enrichment, by these means, of the language without doing it violence or departing from correct usage; in short, the invention of a style which was nothing less than a revolution in the French language—all this was undeniably achieved by Victor Hugo. To close with the words of an eminent critic of the day:

"Less original in thought and feeling than Lamartine, de Vigny, and Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo is more original in style than Lamartine, than de Vigny, than Chateaubriand, than Rousseau, than Mme de Sévigné, than Racine; and I only pause before the name of Lafontaine. He has created for himself a manner of diction in a language which had been existing as a literary language for four centuries, and which had been regenerated at least three times. It seems like a miracle!"

A. LODEMAN.

Ypsilanti, Mich.

THE RELATIONS OF THE EARLIEST Portuguese Lyric School with the Trouba- dours and Trouvères.

In his valuable treatise entitled *Ueber die erste Portugiesische Kunst- und Hofpoesie*, which was based on the study of the four hundred and thirty-seven Portuguese lyric poems then accessible in Varnhagen's edition of the Lisbon codex¹ and Moura's *Cancioneiro d'El-Rei D. Diniz*,² Diez, inquiring into the traces of Provençal influence on the Galecio-Portuguese poets, remarks:

"It will, however, hardly be possible to point out, in the productions of this poetic school thus far edited, poems or passages imitated or translated from the Provençal."

¹ *Trovas e Cantares de um codice do xiv seculo* publicados por F. A. de Varnhagen, Madrid, 1849.

² Paris, 1847.

Though the respectable body of one thousand six hundred and thirty-three poems has since become accessible through the publication of the two Italian codices,³ the opinion expressed by Diez in 1863 has lost comparatively little of its validity.

How, it is natural to ask, are we to explain that while the employment of certain poetic compositions and devices, and the terms assigned to them, are unmistakable proofs of the Provençal influence, the Portuguese poets do not appear to have closely imitated or reproduced either the structure or the contents of Provençal or French poems?

The constant state of unrest and unsafety in which the new kingdom of Portugal was kept during the twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth century by its incessant wars against the Moors and its Christian rival states Castile and Leon, did not permit the Portuguese kings and nobles to indulge in that life of ease and pleasure which is indispensable to the cultivation of music and song, and which alone could have tempted the foreign troubadours to visit their castles.

While we know that Count Philip of Flanders, one of the most famous knights of his time and a warm friend of the trouvères, on his second voyage to Palestine in 1177, visited the court of King Alphonse Henriques, whose daughter Theresa he married in 1181;⁴ that the second king of Portugal, Sancho I (1185-1211), maintained at his court two French minstrels,⁵ and that the infante Pedro of Aragon, who in the same year ascended the throne as Pedro II, in 1196 came to Coimbra to make peace between Portugal and Castile,⁶ on which visit, enthusiastic and liberal friend of the troubadours as he was, he may have been accompanied by Provençal or Catalan singers, we have no evidence of the stay of any Provençal troubadours in Portugal, nor is this

³ *Il Canzoniere portoghese della Biblioteca vaticana*, messo a stampa da Ernesto Monaci. . . . Halle, 1875.

Il Canzoniere portoghese Colocci-Brancuti, pubblicato nelle parti che completano il codice Vaticano 4803, da Enrico Molteni. Halle, 1880.

⁴ A. Herculano, *Historia de Portugal*, i, p. 454.

⁵ Mrs. Vasconcellos, in: *Grundriss der roman. Philologie*, ii, p. 172.

⁶ Herculano, l. c., ii, pp. 70-1.